

## [Catherine Margaret Weber]

[? ?? DUP?]

### FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis

DATE Sept. 9, 1938 SUBJECT German-Russian Folklore

1. Name and address of informant Catherine Margaret Weber
2. Date and time of interview 9-9-38, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
3. Place of interview Farm, 6 m. north on 14th St., Lincoln
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant. George Weber, 17th and Washington
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you. None.
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

Mrs. Weber lives with a daughter, Mrs. Burcham, her husband having died 13 years ago. It is just an average Nebraska farm home, very comfortable, however not modern, and very clean. [???

### FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis

DATE Sept. 9, 1938 SUBJECT German-Russian Folklore

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NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Catherine Margaret Weber

assisted by Bertha Burcham six miles north on 14th St. Lincoln.

1. Ancestry. German
2. Place and date of birth. Graim, Russia, Febr. 23, 1870
3. Family. Husband dead, one son, two daughters; Lives with daughter, and son-in-law.
4. Place lived in, with dates. Graim, Russia, 1870-1885,-Sarotoff, Russia, 1885-1913. - Lincoln, Nebraska, 1913-to present date.
5. Education, with dates. Parochial school which she attended until confirmed 1877-1884.
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates. Mostly homework, 1880-1890; no particular accomplishments. Married, 1890.
7. Special skills and interests. Has hobby of washing and cleaning; likes to do it and also general house work and family work, etc.
8. Community and religious activities. German-Lutheran Church—was active in anti-witch teachings and in converting the neighboring folks from such beliefs.
9. Description of informant. Is very mentally alert, congenial, reliable, and inclined to hard work. Health good and robust, short of stature and large proportions. Features have some characteristics of Russian.
10. Other points gained in the interview probably acquired, but the German type seems to dominate. At the age of 15, she moved to Sarotoff, Russia, a large city and where she was later married and lived until coming to Lincoln, Nebr., in 1913. Mrs. Weber was unusually interested in her only son, George Weber, and was heartbroken at the time of his voluntary

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enlistment in the U.S. Army just prior to their entry into the World War. However she quickly became adjusted to the idea and was then one of the most ardent supporters of the cause and her son's part in it.

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis

DATE September 9, 1938 SUBJECT German-Russian Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Catherine Margaret Weber, North 14th St. Rd.  
care of Bertha Burcham

German-Russian Weddings.

The night before the wedding, one of the men sponsors of the groom and also of the bride, (sponsors of their childhood baptism) if they are still living and around, are sent forth to invite the guests. They go out in the daytime and invite the relatives, close friends and neighbors. A cane is usually carried by each with which they tap at the doors and then enter. Sometimes they carry musical instruments and play a tune before they enter. The invited ones tie a ribbon on the cane and mostly all offer a toast to the bride, the refreshments being furnished by the ones being invited. This wedding custom was more followed in the smaller rural communities.

The next day, the wedding takes place. The wedding party marches from the bride's home to the church, the best man leading the bride and the bridesmaid leading the groom. Music is generally furnished by horns. The ceremony is performed with a preacher, who does not take part in the rest of the celebration. Then the party and guests return to the bride's house in the same order and the celebration starts. There is more music, then a big dinner is served, of soups, meats, potatoes, and sometimes coffee cakes.

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Although at least in the old country, fancy pies or wedding cakes were little known or used by the rural people anyway.

Wines, beers and liquors were served freely, all food and refreshments being furnished by the bride's or groom's fathers.

During the dinner, someone would steal one of the bride's shoes and then this would be auctioned off. The proceeds of this sale would go to the bride. It was supposed to be bought by the best man and returned to the bride's foot. This entitled the best man to the second dance with the bride, the first going to the new husband. It was the custom to pay the musicians after each dance. The crowd did this. The instruments used were violin, accordions, and a musical "board." This was something like a harp having many strings.

The first dance was really a grand march in which only the bride and groom took part. Then the second dance is the bride and best man and then others in order as the dance becomes general. Everyone who dances with the bride must pin money on her dress or as in Russia, hand her some silver. The sum she receives varies with the place, time, people, etc.

Mrs. Weber says that her own daughter married here in Lincoln some years ago received over \$300 hundred dollars in just the same way. But in Russia then, the money collected never amounted to any such figure.

The dance and celebration goes on for two or maybe three days, the guests going and coming as they please and plenty of refreshments to both eat and drink.

At the end of the celebration the bride and groom move to their own new home or farm. Honeymoons are not customary. The money received by the bride goes toward getting new furniture, tools and etc. to start up the new home or farm with.

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For three weeks before the wedding, each Sunday the bride-to-be and groom-to-be must attend church and step forward before the congregation. Then if anyone has any objection to the coming marriage they speak up then or not at all. "Speak now or forever hold your pocketbook," is one expression.

It takes three weeks to get a marriage license in rural Russia and divorces were not encouraged and remarriage after divorce was not legal at that time. They regarded marriages more highly as a people. Witches and Demons

Many of the people believed in evil witches and demons and feared them. Mrs. Weber did not believe in witches and made some effort to talk others out of thinking that way. These people believe that if a witch wished, it could come at night and injure them, in some way and they would not know it until they woke up. Then they would have fearful injuries and sometimes the witches would hurt and destroy their best stock.

One time a woman, believed to be a witch, died and during the funeral, which was afoot, a black goat suddenly appeared out of nowhere, and walked ahead of the preacher and coffin. When they reached the cemetery people were worried and uneasy about this strange thing but the goat just vanished as it had come.

Some men got started to playing cards one day and they played on and on and would not stop, until some days later one of them looked under the table and saw a black demon there. They all were frightened and quickly gave up the game. The demon disappeared.

Note: Funerals in rural districts in Russia, were mostly conducted on foot as the cemeteries were usually at hand and very few could afford carriages.

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(Bertha Burcham, [?] F.D., Lincoln, Nebraska, assisted in this interview and much credit is due her for obtaining the facts and story notes. Mrs. Weber will permit her picture to be taken if necessary.)